

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PSOB TO COVER SUICIDE AND PROFOUND DISABILITY DUE TO PTSD



Congress has expanded the Public Safety Officers Benefits (PSOB) program to cover death due to suicide and profound disability due to occupational Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

WHAT IS THE PSOB PROGRAM?

PSOB is the federal government death and disability benefits program for public safety officers killed in the line of duty in the United States and is separate from the IAFF Memorial. Covered causes of death range from traumatic incidents to medical emergencies. PSOB benefits include a one-time death or disability payment and educational benefits for the deceased's spouse and children. The Department of Justice conducts an in-depth evaluation of each claim, which can take several years to complete. Claims are not paid until the investigation is completed.



In very limited cases, PSOB has been expanded to recognize profound disability due to catastrophic injury caused by a suicide attempt, as well as profound disability caused by occupational PTSD. In both cases, profound disability must develop following on-duty traumatic exposure, and evidence must demonstrate permanent and total impairment that prevents gainful employment. Claimants must be ready to describe the incident.

WHO IS AN ELIGIBLE PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER AND WHO IS AN ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARY?

A sworn fire fighter or EMS provider (of any rank) who works for a governmental or nonprofit agency. Cadets/trainees who die while completing recognized training may be eligible. Typically, beneficiaries are a spouse, partner, children, parents, siblings.

HOW DID CONGRESS EXPAND PSOB TO ADDRESS SUICIDE AND PROFOUND DISABILITY DUE TO PTSD?

In 2022, Congress expanded PSOB to recognize active and retired public safety officers who die by suicide following exposure to one or more on-duty qualifying traumatic event(s). To be eligible, the suicide must have occurred after January 1, 2019; however, the qualifying traumatic incident may have occurred earlier. Conditions include PTSD, Acute Stress Disorder, or other trauma and stress-related disorders. Details may be required regarding any help the person sought prior to their death.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

IAFF PSOB Coordinator Kevin Roche at psob@iaff.org.

For all other questions, please be in touch with your IAFF District Vice President.